

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

18 September 1984

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer, Vice Chairman
National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: The Ogarkov Episode

1. This memo by Harry Cochran, while long and highly speculative, presents a compelling case that the Ogarkov episode is a reflection of the struggle among Soviet leaders over the correct allocation of resources.

2. As Harry sees it, Ogarkov was chief spokesman for the view that more resources need to be allocated to the military if the armed forces are to achieve their assigned mission in the face of the US defensive build-up. The Party, despite internal differences among key Politburo members, remains agreed that such an allocation cannot be allowed without serious risk of upheaval. This struggle is now the driving force behind Soviet actions and policies.

3. Harry's thesis rests on the assumption that the Soviet economy is failing, and that the battle over resource-allocation is inevitable and, ultimately, unresolvable. What matters, then, is not that Ogarkov lost, but that he fought. It means the battle has been joined at the highest levels, with no end in sight or, perhaps, no end possible short of a decisive victory for one faction or the other.

4. Harry is deeply concerned that the assumption on which his thesis rests is not supported by Intelligence Community analysis. As you know, the thrust of Intelligence Community analysis is that the Soviet economy, while troubled, continues to grow at a rate that is modest yet high enough to assure adequate slices of a steadily expanding pie to the military and



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civilian sectors. If Harry is correct, and the Intelligence Community wrong, our analysis of the pressures on Soviet leaders will become increasingly skewed. Thus a danger that the gap will widen between reality and our future interpretations of Soviet activity--and, ultimately, our projections of Soviet behavior.

HEM

Herbert E. Meyer

Attachment: a/s

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14 September 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM : Harry C. Cochran
Special Assistant for Warning

SUBJECT : Conjectures on the Removal of Marshal Ogarkov:
Implications for Warning

1. This memorandum advances the thesis that Ogarkov's removal as chief of staff and first deputy defense minister was precipitated by his excessively aggressive demands for major changes in resource allocations and foreign and defense policies. Ogarkov made the fatal blunder of overplaying his hand in dealing with what he perceived to be a divided and vacillating party leadership under a debilitated and incompetent Chernenko. His disdainful and abrasive treatment of his civilian superiors forced them to unite to remove what they regarded as an intolerable challenge to the party's authority. The specific event or issue that triggered the decision to oust Ogarkov may never be known, but the purge marks the culmination of a protracted four-year struggle over economic priorities and national security policy.

2. Ogarkov's dismissal will not lead to a resolution of profound disagreements which have increasingly pitted the high command of the Soviet Armed Forces against senior party leaders, but it will introduce a new phase in the perennial contest over power and policy. The most significant immediate effect of the purge is that it has exposed the reality of intrigue, infighting, and factional conflict behind the leadership's highly artificial monolithic facade. The Politburo will now find it more difficult to camouflage internal struggles and maintain the usual pretense of unified leadership. Over the longer term, the shock effects of this showdown may intensify dissatisfaction with Chernenko's performance and galvanize his rivals into a move to unseat him.

3. The sole positive outcome of this episode, from the standpoint of the party hierarchy, is that it has dramatically reaffirmed party authority over the professional military. In combining against the threat represented by Ogarkov, Politburo members undoubtedly were impelled by the memory of Nikita Khrushchev's purge of Marshal Georgiy Zhukov from the Party Presidium (Politburo), the Central Committee, and the Defense Ministry in 1957 on the ground that he harbored Napoleonic ambitions that were manifested in his alleged defiance of party control of the Armed Forces. Zhukov's support of Khrushchev's defeat of the "anti-party group" in June 1957 was the decisive factor in Khrushchev's success. Zhukov provided the aircraft used to carry Khrushchev's Central Committee supporters from the provinces into Moscow--a ploy that enabled Khrushchev to overturn a decision by the Presidium to remove him as party leader. Khrushchev rewarded Zhukov by elevating him to full Presidium membership, but ousted him four months later because he came to believe that Zhukov posed a genuine threat to his rule. In staging a preventive purge of Zhukov, Khrushchev had the full support of his

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party colleagues who also regarded Zhukov as a potential menace to the party's authority. These fears were reflected in the characterization of Zhukov as a "new Bonaparte" by his successor as defense minister, Marshal Malinovskiy. A Central Committee resolution accused Zhukov of "pursuing a policy of curtailing the work of party organizations, political agencies, and Military Councils and of eliminating the leadership and control of the party, its Central Committee, and the Government over the Army and Navy." The closest parallel to the party's case against Ogarkov was the description of Zhukov as "a politically deficient figure, disposed to adventurism both in his understanding of the major tasks of the Soviet Union's foreign policy and in his leadership of the Ministry of Defense."

4. The "Zhukov syndrome" has surfaced in comments about Ogarkov by Soviet officials in the last year and a half. In early 1983, a member of the USA and Canada Institute described Ogarkov as a "dangerous man" and claimed that the party leadership was uneasy with him. Central Committee officials said the Committee was worried about the increasing political power of the military and that Soviet military officers "liked what they saw" in Poland, i.e., de facto military rule. speculated that Ground Forces Commander Marshal Petrov would soon replace Defense Minister Ustinov and that Ogarkov would replace Marshal Kulikov as Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief. Last January a senior Polish official claimed that Ogarkov had tried to "lead something" against Andronov and Ustinov and that he had attempted to maneuver his way into the Politburo, but had been blocked by the KGB. A senior Soviet diplomat remarked on 6 September--the day the dismissal was announced--that Ogarkov had "nonparty tendencies."

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5. These extravagant charges against both Zhukov and Ogarkov obviously were politically inspired, but they conceal the party leaders' genuine dread of the prestige and influence of senior military officers as well as pervasive insecurity regarding the political legitimacy of party authority in the eyes of the Soviet Armed Forces and people.

Background and Major Issues

6. The fundamental cause of the party's showdown with Ogarkov was an acute sharpening this summer of the struggle over resource allocations and national security policy that has persisted for four years. In addition to the crucial question of party authority over the military, the showdown was triggered by Ogarkov's demands for higher priority for defense and for a more forceful policy in dealing with the U.S. These demands brought to a head profound disagreements between the high command and the majority of party leaders over three major substantive issues: (a) The Reagan Administration's defense buildup had intensified controversy over "how much is enough?" with Ogarkov insisting that more resources be diverted to finance sophisticated military technology and weapons systems. He also demanded a major buildup of military stockpiles and costly measures to further increase the "mobilization readiness" of the national economy to ensure a rapid "transfer to a war footing in case of necessity." These demands became even more contentious in the past few months when party leaders were immersed in drafting the next Five-Year Economic Plan (1986-1990) which must be completed soon.

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(b) Strategy toward the U.S. and the West generally had become a subject of intense controversy since Andropov's death last February, particularly the issue of how the Soviet Union should respond to the failure to block INF deployments.

(c) The conduct of the war in Afghanistan had generated deep disagreements, particularly since the disappointing outcome of the Panjsher Valley campaign last spring. Soviet military leaders had become seriously concerned over the damage to army morale that was being caused by a seemingly endless entanglement in a hopeless conflict. Ogarkov was obliged to support the demands of his senior commanders for a substantial increase in personnel and equipment in order to avert a humiliating failure in Afghanistan and vindicate the political prestige and military credibility of the Armed Forces.

Resource Allocations

7. The political struggle over the first two issues in the past seven months represented a new and more acute phase of the controversies that dominated the last months of the Brezhnev era. In the fall of 1982, infighting had reached such explosive proportions that Brezhnev and Ustinov were forced to convene the extraordinary meeting with the high command on 27 October. This proved to be a futile effort to defuse agitation by Ogarkov and his senior military colleagues, which party leaders feared might lead to open insubordination. Brezhnev, supported by a speech by Chernenko in Tbilisi two days later, offered a labored and unconvincing justification for his policy of temporizing and waiting for a change in the Reagan Administration's course. Although Brezhnev conceded that U.S. "ruling circles" had "raised the intensity of their military preparations to an unprecedented level" and were "trying to attain military superiority," he did not concede that increases in Soviet defense spending were necessary. Instead, he attempted to enforce discipline on the high command by declaring that, "The Party Central Committee adopts measures to meet all your needs, and the Armed Forces should always be worthy of this concern." Brezhnev's only prescription for dealing with the U.S. challenge was to pledge to adhere to his detente policy and to "step up our efforts and retain the initiative in international affairs." Chernenko elaborated on Brezhnev's policy of standing fast and playing for time: "If Washington proves to be unable to rise above primitive anti-Communism, if it persists in its policy of threats and diktat, we are sufficiently strong and we can wait. Neither sanctions nor bellicose posturing frighten us. We believe in reason. And we believe that sooner or later--and the sooner the better--reason will triumph and the military danger will be averted."

8. In 1981 and 1982, Ustinov had consistently supported Brezhnev's efforts to hold the line on defense spending. He implicitly rejected Ogarkov's alarmism and his demands that the economy should be fully prepared for the contingency of nuclear war. Ustinov made a number of speeches in which he contended that Soviet defensive power "is entirely sufficient to curb any aggressors" and that the Armed Forces "have everything they need to repel aggression from whatever quarter." Ogarkov and his supporters steadfastly refused to accept these rhetorical assurances. They judged that Brezhnev's death had altered the balance of power in the leadership in their favor, and they reopened the issues that had obliged Brezhnev to confront the high command in late October. Their support for Andropov's succession played an important role in defeating Chernenko's candidacy. Andropov, moreover, lacked Brezhnev's political authority and prestige which had enabled him to resist the high command's demands. In his speech to the Central Committee plenum on

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12 November 1982 that elected him general secretary, Andropov tried to appease the military by abandoning his earlier vocal support for detente, improved relations with the U.S., and arms control agreements that would avoid "aimless waste of material resources for no purpose." (Lenin Day speech in 1976) He invoked the rhetoric of chauvinistic nationalism: "We know full well that it is useless to beg for peace from the imperialists. It can be upheld only by resting upon the invincible might of the Soviet Armed Forces." Andropov later made concessions to Ogarkov's concrete demands. A source said in December that Ogarkov and other military leaders had persuaded Andropov to create "new incentives" for Soviet industry to develop technology to produce highly sophisticated weapons systems.

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9. Ogarkov's satisfaction with Andropov's more forthcoming position was reflected in a speech in February 1983 in which he used the party leadership's formula that the Soviet military possessed everything "necessary" to deter an imperialist attack--the first time he had endorsed this line in several years. In a Victory Day speech in May 1983, Ogarkov was even more effusive, saying that the Central Committee and the Soviet government were "implementing" important measures to increase the "mobilization readiness" of industry, agriculture, transport and other sectors of the economy and "to ensure their timely preparation for transfer to a war footing in case of necessity."

10. The lines in the struggle between most of the party hierarchy and the high command that culminated in Ogarkov's ouster were drawn at the Central Committee meeting in November 1982 following Brezhnev's death. In contrast to Andropov's chauvinistic rhetoric and his appeasement of the military, Chernenko advocated very different priorities. Far from affirming a commitment to higher defense priorities, as Andropov had done, Chernenko stressed peaceful coexistence and domestic priorities, arguing that defense depended on economic development. He said Soviet policy objectives would continue to be the welfare of the people and the preservation of peace on earth. Chernenko boldly declared that, "Detente, disarmament, the ending of conflict situations, and the elimination of the threat of nuclear war are the tasks we have set before us."

11. Pervasive disagreements in the Soviet elite over defense priorities and foreign political strategy were clearly evident in the Soviet media following the November 1982 Central Committee meeting. The high command's Red Star endorsed Andropov's line, quoting his theme that "You cannot get peace from the imperialists simply by asking for it," and charged that the imperialists were attempting to "push the peoples onto the path of hostility and military confrontation." In sharp contrast to Red Star's inflammatory rhetoric, Pravda, Izvestia, and other central newspapers ignored Andropov's statements and cast foreign policy aims in distinctly nonbelligerent terms. Sovetskaya Rossiya not only ignored the new general secretary's first pronouncement on defense but quoted approvingly Chernenko's reference to "detente, disarmament, the ending of conflict situations," etc. Izvestia emphasized Chernenko's formula implying that economic development should have higher priority than defense.

12. This dissonance in the Soviet press diminished after Andropov had consolidated his authority in the early months of 1983, but disagreements over fundamental

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policy issues remained very much alive in the background. The consequences of a stagnant economy soon confronted Andropov with the same dilemmas that Brezhnev had faced. By the end of 1983, Andropov had dropped his efforts to appease the military and reverted to the Brezhnev-Ustinov line that "everything necessary" had been done to keep defense capacity at a "proper level." Andropov's declining health after the spring of 1983 weakened his political authority and ability to provide energetic leadership in resolving contentious questions. With the party leadership preparing for an inevitable transition, Ogarkov and his colleagues had no incentive to moderate their demands.

13. Chernenko's succession last February signalled a new round in the protracted struggle. He had long advocated increased investment in consumer goods sectors, urged improved relations with the West, particularly the U.S., and defended arms control agreements as an important element of national policy. Chernenko lost no time in challenging the advocates of higher defense priorities. In a speech to the Politburo on 23 February, he gave consumer welfare first priority. Chernenko's initiative, however, was quickly countered in speeches by Ustinov, Gromyko, and Romanov who stressed the standard goals of developing economic and defensive strength first and consumer welfare second.

Foreign Policy

14. Ogarkov and his military colleagues played a major role in the internal debate over foreign political strategy in the last four years. Ogarkov advocated basic changes in strategy to counter what he repeatedly insisted was an increased threat of nuclear war. In particular, he pressed for more assertive actions in responding to the Reagan Administration's foreign and defense policies, arguing that the Soviet Union should be more aggressive in capitalizing on the political implications of the achievement of strategic parity with the U.S. Ogarkov undoubtedly favored the kind of forward strategy that former Defense Minister Grechko had in mind when he declared in 1974 that, "The historic function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted merely to defending the Motherland and the other socialist countries." Grechko contended that aggression by Western imperialists should be resisted "in whatever distant region of our planet" it occurred-

15. Ogarkov's vigorous lobbying for a more assertive stance was largely responsible for the growing polarization of opinion in the Soviet elite since 1981 on the gravity of the perceived threat created by Washington's policies. The chief of staff and other professional military spokesmen promoted an alarmist view that the U.S. was seeking confrontation with the USSR. The obvious implication of this assessment was that higher priorities for defense and a more forceful Soviet response to U.S. policies were matters of great urgency. The high command relentlessly pressed the argument that the Administration's strategy presages both a shift in the strategic balance against the Soviet Union and actions aimed at provoking a nuclear confrontation. Ogarkov himself likened the alleged U.S. drive for world domination and its "active preparations for nuclear war" to the actions of Napoleon and Hitler.

16. Ogarkov appears to have been frustrated with the party leadership's cautious response to INF deployments. He probably urged a more forceful reaction,

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particularly a much stronger and more threatening Soviet naval presence in "ocean regions and seas" adjacent to U.S. coasts. In a press conference on 5 December 1983, in which Ogarkov, Leonid Zamyatin (head of the Central Committee International Information Department), and First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Komnienko set forth the Soviet rationale for withdrawing from the INF talks, Ogarkov said, "The Soviet systems to be deployed in the oceans and seas relevant to the territory of the United States itself will be no less effective than the American systems that are being deployed in Europe--in range, in yield, in accuracy, and what is especially important, in flight time to their targets." He added that, "The capabilities of the Armed Forces are by no means exhausted by missiles alone. There are other possibilities too, and therefore any attempt made to upset the existing European or general strategic balance would naturally also incur other measures to assure the security of the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community." The limited deployments of Soviet SSBNs in the western Atlantic since mid-January fall far short of Ogarkov's expansive description of "countermeasures" against U.S. territory, and he almost certainly waged a strong fight for a much more conspicuous and credible threat to the continental United States.

17. Ogarkov's alarmist assessment of U.S. capabilities and intentions and his prescription for changes in Soviet strategy were rejected by spokesmen from the Central Committee apparatus, Georgiy Arbatov's USA and Canada Institute, and the Soviet media, obviously with the encouragement and approval of Chernenko and other party leaders. These spokesmen downplayed the threat of war and emphasized growing constraints on the Administration's ability to achieve its goals. The obvious implication of this more confident and relaxed assessment was that no major changes in Soviet defense priorities and foreign policy were needed. In late July 1982, Vadim Zagladin, deputy chief of the Central Committee's International Department, intimated that opponents of the high command's views were split between optimists, who believed that the Soviet Union should simply bide its time until changes emerged in Washington, and others who urged an activist political strategy to blunt American influence abroad. Zagladin rejected the passive, optimistic view and advocated an approach which closely resembled the Soviet Union's actual political strategy since early 1981. He urged the need for discipline and coordination among the Warsaw Pact states and active maneuvers to divide NATO, isolate the U.S., and increase resistance to the Administration's policies. Arbatov endorsed Zagladin's prescription and predicted that the time would come when it could be said that, "It is not with this Administration that history began, and it is not with it that it will end." Izvestia commentator Aleksandr Bovin defined Soviet political strategy more precisely, asserting that the Soviet Union could not expect to reach any "serious agreements" with the Reagan Administration but that "perfectly real opportunities exist for limiting and restricting Washington's adverse influence on world affairs. And it is not only the Soviet Union that is interested in that."

18. The struggle over Soviet foreign policy grew more intense last fall as the countdown to INF deployment approached. Ogarkov was insisting on stronger measures to forestall deployment and to respond if Soviet tactics proved unsuccessful. Ustinov, caught in the crossfire between Ogarkov's pressure and the views of party leaders who favored a more cautious approach, attempted to defuse the

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conflict by appropriating the high command's rhetoric. In a Pravda article on 19 November 1983, he temporarily reversed his earlier support for efforts to hold the line against military lobbying and advocated greater defense efforts, arguing that the Soviet Union must respond vigorously to the U.S. Administration's "consciously conceived and coldly and deliberately implemented long-term strategy" aimed at provoking confrontation with the USSR. High-level party opponents of the high command's position sponsored a riposte on 23 November by Fedor Burlatskiy, a leading political commentator. His article contained an allegory depicting alleged military and political pressures on President Kennedy to take drastic action during the Cuban missile crisis. To underline the contemporary significance of the allegory, Burlatskiy observed that, "Much of what happened then is recalled by the present crisis." He bluntly argued that military leaders must not be allowed to influence crucial political decisions, saying that, "In the conditions of an acute crisis, we have seen that the military are the first to lose their heads."

19. Another high point in the struggle occurred last spring. In an apparent effort to secure greater latitude for maneuver on arms control and relations with the U.S., Chernenko in his speech on 2 March diluted Andropov's rigid precondition for resuming INF negotiations, i.e., the prior removal of Pershing II and cruise missiles from Western Europe. Chernenko said "both sides" should "make a major step on INF," and he cited a list of arms control issues on which the U.S. could demonstrate its peaceful intentions. He asserted that conditions for an accord banning chemical weapons were "beginning to ripen" and said that an agreement in some area of arms control could lead to a "drastic" change in Soviet-U.S. relations. A TASS commentary a few days later said the removal of the American missiles was necessary for INF talks "to be effective," clearly implying that prior withdrawal was no longer a precondition for a resumption of negotiations. Chernenko's cautious and oblique initiative, however, was promptly shot down by Ustinov and Gromyko. The latter expressed skepticism about the value of negotiating with the U.S. and challenged the sincerity of Administration statements favoring improved relations. Soviet pronouncements thereafter reverted to Andropov's unyielding precondition for resuming talks.

Afghanistan

20. Differences between party leaders and the high command over the conduct of the war probably did not play as decisive a role in the showdown with Ogarkov as the contentious issues of resource allocations and policy toward the U.S.. Senior party leaders, however, may have seized upon provocative tactics by Ogarkov in pressing for a substantial reinforcement of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan as the pretext to bring him down.

21. Military leaders had heavily engaged their prestige and credibility in the Panjsher campaign, and its failure--with heavy losses in personnel and equipment--produced severe repercussions in party and military circles. Reporting since the Panjsher debacle has reflected a significant increase in pessimistic assessments of Soviet prospects in the war. officer who was sent to Afghanistan following the campaign said the war is "useless" because it is being fought against the entire Afghan nation. Another Soviet military officer

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said the high command was increasingly concerned about the situation and believed that the Afghan resistance was stronger, better equipped, and more unified than ever before. He claimed that the Soviet military does not believe it can defeat the resistance with its current troop strength and that it may even lose ground. Other reports underscore the judgment of local commanders that no progress is being made and that more troops are needed to do the job.

22. Given the high command's growing pessimism and its anxieties over damage to military morale and the potential political-strategic implications at home and abroad of the failure to turn the tide against the insurgents, it seems likely that Ogarkov insisted on reopening the explosive issues of a greater military commitment in Afghanistan and intensified pressure on Pakistan to cut off aid to the insurgents. In early 1983, Moscow had rejected President Babrak's request for more Soviet troops [] Ogarkov may have argued forcefully this summer that, in the aftermath of the abortive Panjsher campaign, it was no longer possible to adhere to the policy of strict limits on the Soviet military commitment. He may have tried to reinforce his case for a substantial escalation by insisting that the Soviet Union had no choice now that the U.S. was publicly acknowledging its support for the resistance. In late July, the House Appropriations Committee gave widely publicized approval to a supplementary grant of \$50 million in aid to the insurgents. A few weeks later, the Federation of American Afghan Action claimed that \$325 million in CIA funds has been spent on supporting the resistance since the program began shortly after the Soviet invasion. The platforms of both the Democratic and Republican parties this summer endorsed U.S. support for Afghan "freedom fighters," and the State Department in early September welcomed "the interest which would be manifest in a joint congressional resolution" calling for material aid to help the Afghan people "fight effectively for their freedom."

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23. The increase in Soviet-Afghan cross-border air and artillery attacks on Pakistani territory that followed Moscow's 1 July note to Islamabad warning of the "consequences" of Pakistan's "direct participation" in supplying arms to the insurgents may have been intended in part to force a decision by party leaders to authorize an augmentation of Soviet troop strength. Hard-ball tactics of this kind would have aggravated party-military tensions, and it is possible that alleged disregard of party authority on this issue was one of the counts in the indictment of Ogarkov's performance.

Buildup to the Showdown with Ogarkov

24. The high command demonstrated its formidable influence last March by winning the Politburo's approval to withhold military trucks from supporting the harvest this summer and presumably in future years. The fact that the Politburo held at least two discussions on harvest preparations last spring was a clear indication that the decision to withhold military trucks was highly contentious and strongly resisted by some members. Opponents almost certainly argued that the use of military trucks to bring in the crops had long been critical to the success of the harvest and that withholding them would risk disaster. The Politburo's approval of the request represented a significant victory for the high command, and it probably was a major factor in building sentiment among senior party leaders for steps to curtail Ogarkov's power.

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25. The battle over resource allocations and defense priorities was joined again when Chernenko told the Politburo on 31 May 1984 that improving the well-being of the population should receive priority in the new Five Year Plan and in long-range planning beyond 1990. The naming of an individual speaker in a brief news report on a Politburo meeting was highly unusual, and this deferential treatment would have been interpreted by the Soviet elite as signifying an important strengthening in Chernenko's authority and strong support for his views in the Central Committee, particularly among regional leaders. Chernenko presumably was trying to use the consumer welfare issue to cultivate support among provincial hierarchs as a counterweight to the superior strength of his opponents at the center. In any event, Chernenko's thrust immediately provoked a sharp reaction that took the familiar form of emphasis on collective leadership. An authoritative article published in Pravda, Izvestia, and Sovetskaya Rossiya on 18 June repeatedly invoked the principle of collective leadership. In an obvious swipe at Chernenko, it declared that Andropov had shown tireless concern "for the observance of Leninist norms and principles of party life and ensuring collectivity in the work of party organs--from the CPSU Central Committee Politburo to local party committees." The only two quotations from Chernenko both stressed the importance of collectivity.

26. Chernenko's renewed demand that consumer welfare should have first priority apparently prompted strenuous protests from the high command. Ustinov again attempted to appease Ogarkov and company by delivering a speech on 24 June in which he made four separate references to the need to strengthen defense and evoked the "growing threat" of nuclear war. Only a month earlier, Ustinov had restated his standard assurance that the Soviet Union was maintaining its defense capabilities "at the proper level."

27. This new round in the struggle over long-term economic priorities inevitably aggravated disagreements over how to assess the challenge posed by U.S. policies. With the high command again mobilizing its apocalyptic visions of nuclear confrontation, Arbatov--with the approval of Chernenko and other party leaders--issued one of his most disdainful assessments of the Administration. "Reagan's actual foreign policy," he contended, "has proved strikingly unsuccessful, mainly because it contradicts the objective logic of historical development and the realities of our era. The Reagan team truly continues to inhabit a dream world, passing off its desires as reality and its crushing defeats as major successes." Arbatov portrayed the Administration as "dull-witted" and claimed that the U.S., far from preparing for nuclear confrontation, was "experiencing a prolonged, serious political crisis." He invoked the confident theme Chernenko had voiced in his Tbilisi speech in October 1982, predicting that, "The ruling circles of the imperialist powers, and principally the U.S., will sooner or later have to admit once again (such an admission was made in 1972) the vital need for the principles of peaceful coexistence not just in words but in practice." Chernenko himself discounted the threat Ogarkov had long promoted. In his Pravda interview two weeks ago, he said, "In its obsession with force, (the Administration) is quite simply losing its sense of reality....However much the U.S. flexes its military muscle, it will not succeed in changing the world; the world will not live according to American standards."

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The Showdown

28. As the contest over domestic priorities and foreign policy intensified in late summer, the issue of how to respond to the Administration's invitation to Gromyko to meet with President Reagan and Secretary Shultz in late September may have provided the catalyst for the showdown with Ogarkov. The logic of Ogarkov's consistent arguments may have led him to contend that meetings with American leaders would be incompatible with the entire thrust of Soviet political strategy, particularly since the INF deployments last winter. He may have forced a decisive test of strength by insisting that the invitation be rejected and that another resounding indictment of American policy, along the lines of Andropov's denunciation of the Administration's "militarist course" last September, be issued. If a final showdown on this issue did in fact occur, Chernenko undoubtedly rejected Ogarkov's demands and insisted with equal vehemence that the party's fundamental foreign policy strategy as defined by the last three Party Congresses in 1971, 1976, and 1981, required the leadership to accept the American invitation. In this, Chernenko would have been supported by Ustinov, Gromyko, Gorbachev, and Tikhonov and, in fact, by the entire Politburo. Ogarkov would have been completely isolated and his open defiance of party authority would have disarmed any reservations or private opposition to a proposal by Chernenko that Ogarkov should be "relieved of his duties as chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces and first deputy defense minister of the USSR in connection with his transfer to other work."

29. It may have been more than a coincidence that the Politburo meeting that made the decision to remove Ogarkov occurred on the same day that the State Department announced that Secretary Shultz would meet with Gromyko in New York on 26 September and Administration officials said they also planned to invite Gromyko to Washington for further talks with the President and the Secretary. Senior party leaders may have known that Washington would make the announcement on 6 September and believed that this had imposed a deadline for action to remove Ogarkov if a later and more politically costly showdown was to be averted.

Implications for Warning

30. Ogarkov's downfall will only temporarily ease the struggle over power and policy. His successor, Marshal Akhromeyev, undoubtedly will be more discreet in pressing the high command's views. Chernenko's authority will be enhanced to a modest degree, but this episode in itself will not overcome the heavy liabilities--political as well as physical--that have made it difficult for him to consolidate his position. Ustinov and other members of the Defense Council probably will urge that Ogarkov be assigned without delay to a prestigious but powerless post in order to contain resentment in the high command. Party leaders recognize that they must take into account the irreversible reality that the defense establishment, during and since the Brezhnev era, has achieved a predominant voice in shaping military policy. This predominance was institutionalized when Minister of Defense Grechko was elevated to full membership in the Politburo in 1973. Any attempts to curtail the military's great influence would precipitate a dangerous backlash, and the elderly members of the Politburo will be unwilling to risk such a hazardous venture. Ustinov's anxiety to appease the high command publicly during two periods of intense political struggle in the past year reflects his acute awareness of the limitations

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on the party's ability to disregard the high command's views or to reduce its influence.

31. The longer-term effects of the Ogarkov affair on Chernenko's authority and prospects will depend on how he exercises his putative role as head of the Politburo. The removal of an able and assertive chief of staff will afford Chernenko somewhat greater room for maneuver, but if he renews his audacious attempts to bend the party leadership to his will, particularly with respect to reordering priorities in favor of consumer welfare and softening Soviet terms for resuming INF and START negotiations, a formidable coalition of senior leaders almost certainly will move to curtail his power and perhaps even remove him from office in the next six to 12 months. It is unlikely that Chernenko will be able to overcome his principal political liability--the Soviet elite's view of him as a "muzhik" whose only accomplishment was to serve as Brezhnev's chief lackey. Ogarkov's disdain for Chernenko as unqualified for his office is widely shared in party and military circles. This view was expressed

after Chernenko's elevation last February. The military press at that time was visibly cool to him. Sovetskaya Possiya last spring reflected widespread frustration with Chernenko's performance by persistently stressing the need for younger leaders. An editorial in late May argued that older leaders should retire in favor of talented younger leaders.

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32. In sum, the impasse over economic priorities, policies, and reforms will not be eased by a modest strengthening of Chernenko's position. Any initiatives by him to extract Politburo acceptance of his policy prescriptions will not only harden the impasse but may lead to his removal.

33. In foreign policy, Ogarkov's departure will further enhance the authority of Ustinov and Gromyko and expand their latitude for maneuver in the superpower rivalry. The removal of Ogarkov's aggressive lobbying for a more forceful policy toward the U.S. will reduce the drag of military pressures on policy making and expand the tactical flexibility of Soviet diplomacy. Ogarkov seemed to be either unable or unwilling to grasp the subtle foreign political strategy that Brezhnev and Andropov pursued, with the tutoring and advice of Gromyko, Boris Ponomarev, and other experienced and canny foreign policy specialists. Ogarkov's aggressive defense of the Armed Forces' institutional interests appears to have been reinforced by his tendency to accept at face value the political histrionics and bombast inspired by the party leaders' game of judo diplomacy against the U.S.

34. The Politburo will now have greater freedom to prosecute the long-term political strategy that was charted by the 26th Party Congress in February 1981. Soviet diplomacy will be more active in seeking to promote the estrangement of Western Europe from the U.S. and to erode the domestic political authority of NATO governments that are committed to INF deployment. There will be no change in Moscow's dual strategy of waging controlled cold war against the Reagan Administration while pursuing selective detente with Western Europe. The Soviets will be in a better position to exploit the perceived desires of most West European governments, particularly West Germany, to bring about a resumption of arms control negotiations . They are well aware of widespread sentiment

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in Europe for some form of merger of the INF and START talks, and they will be confident that a proposal to replace bilateral U.S.-Soviet negotiations with a new multilateral forum will attract broad public support.

35. There were some indications in the first two months after the Soviets withdrew from the INF and START talks that they were planning to advance a new proposal that would redefine strategic weapons to include the INF missiles, British and French nuclear forces, some Soviet and NATO nuclear-capable aircraft, U.S. missile submarines assigned to NATO missions, and Soviet sea-based missiles deployed off U.S. coasts. The Soviets also appeared to be weighing a proposal that their new formula should be discussed by a multilateral body--either a conference of four or five nuclear powers or the Geneva Disarmament Conference. Ogarkov and the high command may have raised strenuous objections that obliged party leaders to shelve a new arms control initiative.

36. Ogarkov's dismissal will now clear the way for Moscow to advance this proposal. A Soviet Foreign Ministry official recently hinted that Gromyko will announce an "important" new arms control proposal. Two of Gromyko's principal concerns in his talks with President Reagan and Secretary Shultz probably will be to probe for flexibility in the Administration's position on renewing arms control talks and to assess the likely reaction of the White House to a new Soviet proposal. Alternatively, the Soviet leadership may elect to have Gromyko announce the proposal in an address to the UN General Assembly prior to his meetings with U.S. leaders. In the latter case, Gromyko would use his talks with Secretary Shultz on 26 September and his visit to the White House two days later as a platform to trumpet the new and ostensibly constructive Soviet initiative. The Soviets of course expect that the U.S., Britain, and France will promptly reject the new proposal. The principal objective of this initiative will be to reopen the entire INF deployment issue in Western Europe by offering seemingly plausible Soviet concessions in exchange for the removal of the Pershing II and cruise missiles.

37. The fundamental direction of Soviet foreign policy has been firmly established since early 1981, and Ustinov, Gromyko, and senior members of the Central Committee Secretariat have heavily engaged their political positions and prestige in defending and promoting this strategy. Chernenko's public statements in the last several years imply that he has strong reservations about the soundness of some aspects of this strategy, particularly the cold war stance toward the U.S. which requires continued high priority for defense spending and heavy industry. His consistent advocacy of top priority for economic development and consumer welfare may impel him to press for some easing of political tensions with the U.S. and for efforts to reach a limited accommodation that would improve prospects for arms reduction agreements and thereby ease the regime's economic dilemmas.

38. In weighing prospects for change in Soviet policies, the main imponderables will be Chernenko's authority and political skill and the degree to which he and other central and regional party leaders who share his priorities will attempt to capitalize on the situation created by the removal of Ogarkov's influence. The record of Chernenko's seven-month tenure as general secretary provides little

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reason to anticipate an early break in the impasse over economic priorities and reforms or a shift toward retrenchment and accommodation in foreign policy. The predominance of Ustinov and Gromyko in shaping national security and foreign policies will make the prevailing strategy impervious to pressures for change from central and regional party leaders who generally favor Chernenko's definition of priorities. Tensions between senior party leaders who dominate decision-making at the center and second-and-third echelon leaders in Moscow and the regions who favor a reordering of existing priorities will shape the internal dynamics of Soviet politics for the foreseeable future. It would seem that the relative immobility in Soviet domestic and foreign policies will be broken only when the final departure of the Ustinov-Gromyko generation opens the way for leaders who may be more receptive to the assessment of the outside world and the policy imperatives advocated by Chernenko and his supporters.

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